

Infrastructure  
Canada

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**BRIEFING NOTE TO THE MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES****THE SMART CITIES CHALLENGE:** [REDACTED]

(For Information)

**PURPOSE**

To provide you with background information on the first round of the Smart Cities Challenge program [REDACTED]

**SUMMARY**

- The first round of the Smart Cities Challenge engaged communities of all sizes from all across Canada, generated significant interest, and spurred new and innovative thinking at the local level.

- [REDACTED]

**CONTEXT AND KEY FACTS**

- Connected technologies and data are transforming communities and reshaping how local governments deliver services to their residents. Despite the wide range of uses and the high potential to improve the efficiency of community systems, services and infrastructure, the implementation of smart technologies by many Canadian communities remains in the early stages. The Smart Cities Challenge is designed to creatively address this issue. This experimental, prize-based competition is quickly growing awareness of the opportunities presented by smart technologies across the country, sparking innovation, and jumpstarting adoption at the community level.
- The Smart Cities Challenge is open to all municipalities, local or regional governments, and Indigenous communities across Canada. Local governments and their residents are invited to identify persistent local problems and propose scalable and replicable solutions using connected technologies and data. The Challenge is unique internationally among smart city initiatives in that it has an open scope, is locally-focused and is resident-led. It is not "tech for tech's sake," but rather "tech for good." Its core goal is to thoughtfully harness new tools to help communities become healthier, more inclusive and more liveable.
- The first round of the Challenge saw a positive response. A total of 225 communities applied, representing all regions of the country and a wide range of community types and sizes. The department received creative proposals in a broad range of areas important to residents, including economic development, integrated transit and mobility, environmental

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sustainability, demographic pressures and health. Communities competed for four prizes: one \$5 million prize, two \$10 million prizes, and one \$50 million prize. Slates of twenty finalists and four winners were recommended by an independent jury. The winners of the first competition were announced in May 2019.

- In parallel with the Smart Cities Challenge, the department also administers the Smart Cities Community Support Program. This program funds not-for-profit organizations to provide support to Canadian communities as they explore smart city solutions – whether they are participants in the Challenge or not. The current funding recipient is Evergreen, who is successfully providing capacity-building advice, information and guidance to build internal capacity in communities of all sizes. This program was launched in 2018 and will be renewed in FY 2020-21 for an additional two years.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

- As an experimental program, the Smart Cities Challenge has the ability to take stock and draw from its lessons learned, integrating these findings into design changes in subsequent Challenge rounds. Following the announcement of winners in May 2019, the department completed a comprehensive assessment of the design of the first competition. This analysis considered all aspects of program design and implementation and drew from a rich collection of data from diverse sources, including detailed participant surveys, verbal feedback, advice from external experts and stakeholders, qualitative and quantitative analyses, consultation and engagement sessions, social media, and other reporting information.
- Findings from the assessment report suggest that our original formula worked: the design succeeded in generating change and positive impacts at the community level, and the competitive model succeeded in building broad awareness and uptake in communities of all sizes.



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**NEXT STEPS**

- The department will continue to work [REDACTED]
- I welcome the opportunity to brief you and your office on the Smart Cities Challenge, its results and impact thus far, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Kelly Gillis  
Deputy Minister  
Infrastructure and Communities

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Date